

**Jonathan Boucher to George Washington, April 2, 1770,
Letters to Washington and Accompanying Papers.
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FROM THE REVEREND JONATHAN BOUCHER.

CAROLINE April 2d. 1770.

DR. SIR

I felt so strongly the Truth of your Remarks, that I took Shame to myself for having reduc'd You to so distressing a Dilemma. Believe it however, Sir, that it was Necessity & not Inclination, that urged Me to the Step, which yet I shd. hardly have taken, at last, cou'd I have supposed the Circumstances of Mastr. Custis's Estate to have been as you represent them.

I have now the Pleasure to inform You that I trust my present Difficulty will be surmounted, witht. laying my Friends under a Contribution—I am almost sure it will, if Mr. Claiborne will only be punctual in paying his £50, which I was Security for. A Debt, of long standing, & which I had almost despair'd of, fortunately for Me, has just been paid: & This, with some Collections I have made from the Estate of a deceased Friend, on wc. I administered, have enabled me to make up my sum of £230. this last, indeed, was an Expedient I very unwillingly had Recourse to; but I now learn, by Experience, that real Distress is very Effectual in teaching a Man to get the Better of certn. delicate Qualms of Conscience—& let This teach Me to view, with Candor, the Peccadillos of Others in similar Circumstances. I purpose replaceing This with what I am to receive of You on Mastr. Custis's Acct., & therefore, if not highly inconvenient to You, wou'd this Year prefer a Bill to Cash. And

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shou'd I again be obliged to call on You before it is due, as I hope I shall not, I flatter myself with being again excused.

—Might not your proposed Improvemts. of ye. Navigan. of the Potomac to the Wtward be accomplished on some such Plan as This? I mean by obtaing. an Act of Assembly, empowering certn. Commissioners to be therein named to borrow the Sum supposed to be wanted, at a high Interest (suppose 10 pr. Cent) & this Interest to be rais'd fm. a Tax proportioned thereto, on all ye Vessels makg. Use of sd. Navigan.? Or, if ye Navigan. wd. bear it, wc. tho pr.haps it might not at first, yet, undoubtedly it soon would, might not this Tax be rated so, as to produce a considerable Surplus, enough not only to sink the original Loan, but to raise a Fund for still farthur Improvemts.—Are not some of the Canals in Engld., & ye. Turnpike on this System? &, if I mistake not, the very grand Canal now carrying on in Scotland is so too.—You, doubtless, have heard long ago wt. was done on this Matter by the Maryland Assembly; but, as I fear, fm. ye. Acct. of Things, our Assembly wd. not easily be persuaded to advance any Cash towards the Scheme, tho' I can have no immediate Interest in it, I shd. be grieved so beneficial a Project shd. be dropp'd.

I guess my Friend Mr. Addison¹ met with some Difficulties in ye. Bargain He proposed to make for Me, as I have never heard from Him nor about the Boy.

Custis, who, as well as myself, is but just return'd from a Trip I took Him into Richmond County, is gone to write to his Mamma, to whom, & to Miss Custis, with many Thanks for thr. obliging Helps to my Garden, I beg my affectionate Compliments.

I am, very respectfully, Sir, Yr. Obedt. Hble Servt. JONAN. BOUCHER

1 Rev. Walter Dulany Addison, of Annapolis, a lifelong friend and warm admirer of Dr. Boucher.